agricultural production to the market so as to ensure maximization of value addition, minimize wastages and improve farmers' income. The proposed scheme is under finalization in consultation with Planning Commission for inclusion in the XI Five Year Plan and upon approval & notification of the scheme, formal proposals would be invited. Meanwhile, the Ministry has awarded a pre-feasibility study for identification of locations for five Mega Food Parks initially at five regions, which *inter-alia* includes the Southern Region. 30 Mega Food Parks are envisaged to be set up under the scheme during the XI Plan period.

Storage facility for fruits and vegetables

141. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large quantity of fruits and vegetables are wasted in the country every year due to shortage of proper storage facility;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (c) According to the Vision 2015 report prepared by Rabo India Finance Pvt. Ltd., wastage of Agricultural food items (including fruits) is estimated to be about Rs. 58,000 crore annually, occurring at various stages of handling after harvesting due to lack of adequate post-harvest infrastructure, lack of cold chain facilities, transportation, proper storage facilities etc. Wastage of fruits and vegetables is estimated to be of the order of 22% due to such inadequate facilities.

The Government, through its schemes for financial assistance and other promotional measures, facilitates creation of food related infrastructure aimed at reducing wastages, enhancing value addition and increasing shelf life. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries, through its plan schemes during Xth Plan, has been promoting development of infrastructure for food processing industries including cold storages as integral part of processing units or part of common facilities in Food Park. During the Xth Plan, the Ministry has implemented a scheme for cold chain facilities whereunder asistance upto 25% of the cost of plant & machinery and technical civil works in general areas and 33.33% in difficult areas with a common ceiling of Rs. 75 lakhs was admissible to all implementing agencies. During the XI Plan, the Ministry is working on launching a revamped comprehensive Cold Chain Infrastructure Scheme for creating integrated cold chain infrastructure at different levels-farm level primary processing centre-cum-cold chain, collection/aggregation centers and Strategic Distribution Centers. The initiative being undertaken by the Ministry are aimed at filling the gaps in the supply chain, strengthening of cold chain infrastructure leading to overall development of food processing industries and reduction in wastages.

Pending proposals for food processing industries

142. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state the details of the proposals for food processing industries lying pending with his Ministry as on date, indicating the period of pendency of each proposal, the details in giving clearance to each of these proposals and by when all these proposals are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): Ministry provides financial assistance in the form of grant-in-aid to entrepreneurs for setting up/modernization/expansion of food processing industries in various sectors all over India. The year-wise number of cases pending in the Ministry under the Scheme for setting up/modernization/expansion of Food Processing Industries is as follows:-

Year	Number of cases
2002-03	13
2003-04	55
2004-05	262
2005-06	192
2006-07	327

On receipt of the proposals, the Ministry processes and examines; and only complete proposals as per the guidelines of the Ministry, are considered for approval and financial assistance is released accordingly.

In order to ensure speedy disbursement of the financial assistance, the Ministry has decided to decentralize the disbursement procedure through banks under the Scheme of setting up/modernization/expansion of food processing industries w.e.f. 01.04.2007. All the pending applications are also being sent to the concerned banks from which the units have taken term loan for sanction and disbursement of grant under the scheme.

Projections for food processing in Punjab

143. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has initated any new projects for food processing in Punjab during the last two years and so far during 2007;

(b) if so, the details thereof, project-wise indicating particularly the location of each project; the funds required for their completion, project-wise; and

(c) by when all these projects are likely to be completed, project-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Food Processing Industries has embarked upon a number of strategic interventions in the food processing sector which includes strengthening of infrastructure. The States/UTs are also required to make concerted efforts for the development of food processing sector in their respective States which includes framing of Food Processing Industrial Policy and short term and long term action plans.

Ministry provides financial assistance in the form of grants-in-aid to entrepreneurs for setting up/modernization/expansion of food processing industries in various sectors all over India including the State of Punjab. Ministry does not set up food processing units on its own.